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- SENCIER, G. *Le Babouvisme après Babeuf; sociétés conspirations communistes (1830-1848)*. (Paris: Rivière. 1912.)
- SILVIN, E. *Why I am opposed to socialism. Original papers by leading men and women*. (Sacramento, Cal.: Edward Silvín. 1913. 75c.)
- STERN, H. I. *A socialist catechism*. (Berkeley, Cal.: H. I. Stern. 1912. Pp. 62.)
- STIEKLOFF, G. *La fraction "social démocrate" dans la troisième douma*. (Paris: Rivière. 1913. 0.75 fr.)
- WORTHINGTON, H. S. *Millionism vs. socialism; or timocracy vs. democracy*. (New York: Shakespeare Press. 1912. Pp. 190. \$1.)

Statistics and Its Methods

The Distribution of Incomes in the United States. By FRANK HATCH STREIGHTOFF. Columbia University Studies in History, Economics and Public Law, Vol. LII, No. 2. (New York: Longmans, Green and Company. 1912. Pp. 171. \$1.50.)

This essay attempts a comprehensive summary and critical analysis of the statistical material bearing on the subject of its title. A small amount of space is given to introductory general considerations. The sources of information are next reviewed. Previous treatment of the same subject, especially by Spahr and Nearing, is discussed and criticised. A chapter on The Distribution of Wages occupies one third of the available space. About one fifth as much is given to Incomes from Property. The essay concludes with two suggestions to the Census Bureau. A useful bibliography is appended.

It is not possible in a review to give "the gist of the matter" where the interest of the book reviewed lies in the material brought together rather than in conclusions arrived at. The author himself would apparently consider such positive conclusions as are drawn rather incidental. He says, "Knowledge of the distribution of incomes . . . in a form definite enough for practical use . . . does not exist" (p. 155). This and similar phrases suggest that the author is perhaps too little theoretical. The reviewer feels that more detailed statistical and theoretical analysis and a bolder forcing of conclusions from the data would be justified, and, indeed, will not cease to be necessary after more and better material is available. The extension of the census enumeration schedules in the ways suggested—asking the farmer the amount of rent and interest paid

(also in compilation classifying the incomes of farm families by size and by condition of operator) and asking for the rent or rental value of premises occupied by urban families—will not do away with the necessity of such procedure; nor will data resulting from income taxation under the sixteenth amendment. But a doctoral dissertation can seldom aspire to be more than a *Vorarbeit*.

The material used appears to the reviewer to be comprehensive. To it might be added the results of agricultural surveys such as the one dealt with in Bulletin 295 (March, 1911) of the Agricultural Experiment Station of the New York State College of Agriculture (see *AMERICAN ECONOMIC REVIEW*, vol. I, p. 630). Page 397 of this bulletin shows classified labor incomes on 749 farms in Tompkins County. Considerable detailed wage data for over 50,000 employees of lighting and transportation companies in New York city are made available by the First District Public Service Commission.

Much attention is paid to statistical technique, probably as much as is to be expected where the analysis is not carried farther. The significance that the mere aggregate number receiving some income, however small, from property (p. 146) can have, when the amount received by the individual counted is merely the return on a savings bank deposit put aside as a reserve rather than for the sake of income, seems doubtful, especially in the light of the idea of psychical income from consumable goods (p. 143 and elsewhere) according to which every man that owns the clothes he wears receives income from them and in so far enjoys income from property. The proposition that there is an income from insurance consisting of dividends credited on premiums is objectionable. That the comptroller of New York state has not the statistical interest or warrant to compile and analyze the returns under the transfer tax is not sufficient ground for saying that taxation in this case promises but slight aid. The material is there (in the Surrogates' files) merely waiting to be worked. The author makes no use of the idea of derivative income, but he does not attempt a synthesis of the data such as would make that conception important.

The reviewer feels so strongly that we need a quantitative theory of economic distribution and that the interest of such an essay as this is chiefly as a step towards such a development, that he may appear not to be duly appreciative of what has been done.

The book should doubtless be appraised from a less exacting viewpoint. As a critical compilation of income statistics it is unquestionably an eminently valuable piece of work.

G. P. WATKINS.

The Elements of Statistical Method. By WILLFORD I. KING.
(New York: The Macmillan Company. 1912. Pp. xvi,
250. \$1.50.)

The Elements of Statistical Method is not a comprehensive study; it does not present new material or methods; it is not a handbook of the sources of statistical data; it does not treat fully of the numerous practical problems connected with the collection, presentation, analysis, and judgment of definite classes of social and economic statistics, such as population, vital, price, trade, wage, and financial statistics. It does present in convenient shape statistical history and methods that can be found *in extenso* in the texts of such writers as Bowley, Meitzen and Yule. The author states in the preface that the book is meant "to furnish a simple text in statistical method for the benefit of those . . . who desire a general knowledge of the more elementary processes involved in the scientific study, analysis and use of large masses of numerical data. . . . No pretense whatever has been made, in this work, of presenting any but the most simple of the mathematical theorems upon which statistical method is based."

The questions to be considered in reviewing the book, then, are these: Is the subject matter well selected? Are the statements accurate and supported by adequate citation of authorities? Is the method of treatment good? Are the explanations clear?

A number of subjects that should be treated even in an elementary, methodological work on social and economic statistics are neither discussed in the text nor referred to in the index. For instance, there is no reference to "wages," "budgets," or "census." The extremely important subject of average indices of prices, wages, etc., is treated in three and one half pages, while skewness is given eight pages, and the ratio of variation is given sixteen pages.

The definition of correlation given is not well stated: "Correlation means that between two series or groups of data there exists some causal connection (p. 197)." In regard to index numbers of prices, Mr. King states that "if one wishes to study the effect of a changing volume of gold or of money on prices